



June 2014

Senator Rockefeller's Dedication to the Children's Health Insurance Program

Since the creation of CHIP, Senator Rockefeller has been a staunch advocate for the program and has worked to make important improvements to CHIP. His past and present CHIP priorities, including his introduction this month of the CHIP Extension Act of 2014, are described below.

Rockefeller CHIP Priorities: Pre-2009

- **Creation of CHIP in 1997:** Senator Rockefeller worked tirelessly to make certain that children in families with incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid, but too low to afford private insurance had access to affordable health care designed to meet the specific needs of children. Senator Rockefeller's efforts led to the creation of the bipartisan Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 1997.
- **Eliminating Short-Term CHIP Funding Shortfalls.** Senator Rockefeller introduced the *Keep Children Covered Act of 2006*, bipartisan legislation to prevent Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 federal CHIP funding shortfalls expected in 17 states. This legislation passed as part of the National Institutes for Health (NIH) reauthorization bill and filled the FY 2007 shortfalls through the middle of May 2007. He then successfully introduced this legislation again to fill the remaining FY 2007 shortfalls.
- **Efforts to Reauthorize CHIP in 2007.** Senator Rockefeller introduced the bipartisan Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) Reauthorization Act of 2007. This legislation became the basis for the Baucus-Grassley-Rockefeller-Hatch agreement to reauthorize the program. However, neither this agreement nor a more conservative version became law as both pieces of legislation were vetoed by and President Bush.
- **Fighting the August 17 Directive.** On August 17, 2007, President Bush issued a directive limiting state CHIP programs to serving children up to 250% of the federal poverty level, even though many states, including West Virginia, had passed legislation to extend eligibility to 300 percent. Senator Rockefeller introduced legislation nullifying that directive. While this legislation did not become law, the directive was repealed when President Obama took office.

Rockefeller Priorities: CHIP Reauthorization in 2009 and 2010

Senator Rockefeller was actively involved in drafting the *CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2009 (CHIPRA)*, which President Obama signed into law on February 4, 2009. HE was also instrumental to extending the CHIP program when the Affordable Care Act passed in 2010.

In this period, Senator Rockefeller successfully fought for the following improvements to the program:

- **More Stable Long-Term Funding.** After years of federal funding shortfalls, CHIPRA created more stable funding through a revised funding formula and the creation of a federal contingency fund to cover funding shortfalls and unexpected increases in health care costs.
- **More Children Covered.** Under CHIPRA, states can receive bonus payments for enrolling the lowest-income children – those eligible for Medicaid. Also, money was provided to help states with outreach efforts. This meant that states could find and enroll children who were eligible for Medicaid or CHIP but remained uninsured.
- **Improved Benefits for Children and Pregnant Women.** CHIPRA required all states to provide more comprehensive dental benefits for children, and raised mental health benefits to equal the level of medical and surgical benefits. Also, states were given three new options: (1) covering pregnant women for prenatal and postpartum care; (2) using CHIP funds to help families afford private coverage offered by their employers; and (3) providing supplemental dental benefits to children enrolled in private coverage.

Rockefeller Priorities for 2014: Extending CHIP through 2019

Without further extension, CHIP funding would expire on September 30, 2015. If that were to happen, nearly 2 million children will lose access to any affordable health care and the over 8 million children who rely on the program now will lose access to the child-specific services and networks that CHIP provides. Senator Rockefeller has introduced legislation to extend the program through 2019, consistent with the requirement in current law that states maintain their CHIP and Medicaid efforts through that date.